United Nations A/S-30/PV.1

General Assembly

Thirtieth special session

Official Records

1st plenary meeting
Tuesday, 19 April 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

Temporary President: Mr. Lykketoft ..... (Denmark)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Opening of the session by the Chair of the delegation of Denmark

The Temporary President: I declare open the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem.

As representatives are aware, this special session is being held pursuant to resolutions 67/193 of 20 December 2012, 69/200 of 18 December 2014 and 70/181 of 17 December 2015. Pursuant to paragraph 45 of resolution 67/193, the special session will review the progress in the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, including an assessment of the achievements and challenges, within the framework of the three international drug control conventions and other relevant United Nations instruments.

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

Minute of silent prayer or meditation

The Temporary President: I now invite representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/S-30/2)

The Temporary President: I should like, in keeping with the established practice, to invite the attention of the General Assembly to document A/S-30/2, concerning Article 19 of the Charter of the United Nations.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in this document?

It was so decided.

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Appointment of members of the Credentials Committee

The Temporary President: Rule 28 of the rules of procedure provides that the General Assembly, at the beginning of each session, shall appoint, on the proposal of the President, a Credentials Committee consisting of nine members.

In accordance with precedents, the Credentials Committee of the thirtieth special session should have the same membership as that of the seventieth regular session of the Assembly, namely, Argentina, Austria, Barbados, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, South Africa and the United States of America.

If there is no objection, I shall consider the Credentials Committee constituted accordingly.

It was so decided.

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The Temporary President: In that connection, may I invite the attention of the members of the Assembly to a note verbale from the Secretary-General, dated 4 February 2016, in which it is stated that credentials should be issued for all representatives to the special session in accordance with rule 27 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. I would urge all members to submit the credentials of their representatives to the Secretary-General as soon as possible.

Item 4 of the provisional agenda

Election of the President

The Temporary President: I now invite the Assembly to proceed to the election of the President of the General Assembly at its thirtieth special session.

In that connection, it has been proposed that the President of the seventieth regular session, His Excellency Mr. Mogens Lykketoft of the Kingdom of Denmark, be elected by acclamation as President at the thirtieth special session.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to elect Mr. Mogens Lykketoft President of the General Assembly at its thirtieth special session by acclamation?

It was so decided.

The Temporary President: I extend my sincere congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Mogens Lykketoft and invite him to assume the presidency.

I request the Chief of Protocol to escort the President to the podium.

Mr. Lykketoft took the Chair.

Statement by Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the General Assembly at its thirtieth special session

The President: I am thankful for my election as President of the General Assembly at this special session. Before we begin, let me extend my sincere condolences and the solidarity of the General Assembly to the Governments and people of Ecuador and Japan, who have been deeply affected by deadly earthquakes over the past weekend. Our thoughts are with all those who lost loved ones and, indeed, all those who are working hard at the relief efforts.

It is a great honour to welcome all participants to the General Assembly at its thirtieth special session, on the world drug problem. I wish to thank Minister Løhde for presiding over the opening of this session. I also wish to thank the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) in Vienna for leading the preparations for this special session. I recognize the commitment and engagement of all that resulted in the document we have before us today (see A/S-30/4).

When young people see their health deteriorate, their life opportunities evaporate and their families disintegrate; when those seeking treatment are stigmatized or discriminated against, and HIV/AIDS sufferers are marginalized; when poor farmers struggle to find alternative sources of income and indigenous peoples face challenges to their centuries-old practices; when organized criminals bring in immense profits, attract disenfranchised youth and take over and destroy communities; when courageous politicians and officers are gunned down, others are corrupted and the entire State-apparatus is undermined; when millions are imprisoned for possession, including of small quantities, and others are executed for trafficking; when supply and demand affect societies differently and solutions in one country result in problems in another; when those who need controlled substances for medical purposes cannot have access to them; when all of this and more comes together, we have the world drug problem — a problem that demands international action; a problem that can be overcome.

The presence and engagement of so many distinguished representatives here today is a show of commitment to doing just that. A little over six months ago, many of them gathered in this very Hall to embrace the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) and to send a signal to people everywhere that the transformation towards a more sustainable and just world was under way. Today, bearing in mind the linkages between the two, we can deliver a similar message that, together, we can more effectively address the world drug problem. With openness and a willingness to learn, we can understand better that which separates us and rally around that which unites us. We can build upon actions that have proven to work.

During these three days in the plenary, round tables and side events, we will discuss the great challenges associated with this issue and how best to address them. No society can claim to be completely free from the dire consequences that illicit drugs bring, or to have no relation to many causes, and no country can

deny that addressing this problem is a common and shared responsibility.

Clearly, this is a problem with many dimensions, from human rights to sustainable development, from health impacts to the perspective of the drug users, and from corruption to organized crime. Tackling illicit drugs therefore requires a long-term, integrated and multidisciplinary approach. It also calls for coherence among our public health, social and education sectors, sustainable development and law enforcement policies, together with cooperation on the local, regional and international levels, as well as multilateral responses. It requires that consideration be given to all the major causes, consequences and related aspects such as respect for proportionality, human rights and the rule of law; considerations regarding the well-being of society and of the individual; and measures to bring about social stability and security, while striving for comprehensive and balanced policy interventions.

Furthermore, the past has shown that we can equip ourselves better for this challenge if we listen to each other as Member States, because every country experiences this problem and applies solutions in its own way. We must also listen to civil society, the scientific community and academia, parliamentarians, youth, women, children and affected communities. I recognize and applaud the role played by each of these stakeholders in the preparatory process.

Notwithstanding the ever-increasing efforts and progress made by States, relevant international organizations and United Nations entities, as well as civil society, the world drug problem continues to affect the lives of millions of people and to undermine sustainable development, political stability and democratic institutions. It is indeed time to evaluate the progress achieved since the last session, to reflect on new approaches and to address evolving and emerging challenges. I hope therefore that the next three days will be an opportunity to look ahead to where we would like to be by 2019, when the current Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem comes to an end.

The special session on the world drug problem is now open. I sincerely hope that it will provide a space for a productive discussion based on the document prepared by the CND that we are about to adopt. In doing so, I hope that it helps us to address the complex world drug problem more effectively and humanely.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson.

The Deputy Secretary-General: I thank you, Mr. President, for inviting me to address this meeting of the General Assembly at its thirtieth special session, on the world drug problem, on behalf of the Secretary-General, who is travelling.

The special session provides an opportunity to assess the achievements, shortcomings and challenges of the international drug-control regime. The world drug problem affects virtually every nation and all sectors of society. I am sure that everyone here thought about the victims and tragedies created by this scourge when we observed a minute of silence just now. Drug trafficking and organized criminal networks fuel violence and feed corruption. They weaken institutions and the rule of law. As the Security Council has recognized, profits from drug-trafficking are funding terrorism and violent extremism in today's world.

Drug policies have serious human rights implications. Some people dare not seek the care they need, fearing punishment or forced treatment. Drug abuse results in tragic and terrible human costs to users and, not least, to their families and communities. It kills and injures millions of people. It is linked to the spread of HIV, tuberculosis and hepatitis. It is vital that we engage at the highest level to provide care and treatment to those affected. We must end the cynical exploitation for profit of the most vulnerable people in our societies.

The ultimate goal of the international drug control conventions is to ensure the health and welfare of humankind. In applying them, we must balance security and public safety concerns with considerations of health, human rights and development. We all know that some aspects of the drug agenda are sensitive and controversial. We also know that some countries and regions have suffered more than others. It is therefore important that we listen to each other and learn from one another's experiences, not least about how people's well-being is affected.

I commend Member States for their informed and wide-ranging discussions in the lead-up to this special session and for their dedication to reaching a consensus on a draft outcome document (A/S-30/L.1,

annex). I thank the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and especially Ambassador Shamaa, Chair of the Board of the Commission, for their work on this important document. I would also like to thank civil society around the world for its critical contributions to moving this important agenda forward. Addressing the world drug problem requires the active and continued involvement of all Governments, all sectors of society and, I would argue strongly, all parts of the United Nations system. Now is the time for implementing what has been agreed on after serious and productive negotiations.

It is encouraging that Member States are committed to treating and rehabilitating people with drug-use disorders. Prevention and treatment require human-rights-based approaches adapted to the needs of individuals. We must, for instance, recognize that people in need should have access to vital medicines. Drug policies should make use of all the tools of the conventions and agreements on drugs, but also of those on corruption, organized crime and terrorism. At the same time, respect for human rights and accountability in operations aimed at enforcing the law are critical. That means considering alternatives to conviction or punishment when appropriate. It means sentencing those convicted in proportion to their crimes. And in our view, it means refraining from applying the death penalty, thereby conforming to human rights obligations.

Poverty and inequality drive illicit drug production and use. The best prevention policy is working decisively and universally to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), which was so skilfully negotiated and endorsed in September of last year. We have a new tool in our hands that we must use. Countering drug-related crime and corruption is critical if we are to achieve stable societies and effective institutions, which form the foundation for sustainable development. Drugs not only threaten development and lives lived in dignity, they also threaten stability and security.

The challenges posed by the world drug problem require a global response that is simultaneously effective, compassionate and humane, alongside parallel national action, of course. We need to mobilize our efforts and good forces on that basis and in that spirit. Looking forward to 2019, we should focus on new challenges and threats, including the emergence of new psychoactive substances. The States Members of the United Nations, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the World Health Organization and the whole United Nations system must respond in a timely, effective and flexible fashion to those and other looming dangers. We must base our decisions on research, data and scientific evidence, and we must not shy away from new ideas and approaches, even if they may sometimes challenge traditional assumptions.

The health and welfare of people around the world should be our overarching objective, in the spirit of "We the peoples"— the first three words of the Charter of the United Nations. It is the peoples whom we are here to serve. I encourage everyone here to continue the debate as openly and inclusively as possible as we advance towards the conclusion of the 10-year period established in the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. The draft outcome document before us represents a good basis from which to take concrete steps forward both nationally and internationally. Again, I congratulate Member States on reaching a consensus outcome at this critical stage of our work. Let us make the most of this special session to set a course for policies that support our common aspirations for healthy people, peaceful and just societies, and a better future for all.

The President: In accordance with resolution 70/181, I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Vladimir Galuška, Chair of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

Mr. Galuška (Commission on Narcotic Drugs): It is an honour to address the General Assembly at its thirtieth special session dedicated to the world drug problem. As the Chair of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) at its fifty-ninth session, I had the opportunity during the preparatory process in Vienna to witness the intensive efforts and commitment of all — Member States, United Nations entities, regional organizations and civil society. This special session is the culmination of those efforts, and I look forward to our discussions here.

In 2009, Member States adopted the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem and set a series of important goals for 2019. This special session represents one of the milestones of that 10-year period. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs is the United Nations organ with the primary responsibility for drug

control matters. I am pleased to say that the debates held over recent years have enriched its work to an unprecedented degree. Vienna has become a forum to discuss the world drug problem in any and all of its multiple dimensions. Those dimensions include the prevention and treatment of drug-use disorders; human rights; crime and violence; the availability of drugs for medical purposes; the value of scientific research, evidence and data; new psychoactive substances; alternative development and socioeconomic issues; international cooperation and the provision of adequate resources.

Owing to the preparatory process for this special session, the CND has been focusing intensified discussions on sharing information on how to effectively implement programmes and policies on the ground, taking into account the very different nature the world drug problem presents in different parts of the world. The discussions among Member States have been enriched by the wide participation of other relevant stakeholders from around the world.

At the most recent meeting of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, held just last month, I watched more than 1,800 participants from Governments, United Nations entities and specialized organizations, intergovernmental and regional organizations, civil society, the scientific community, academia and youth sharing information on the various challenges posed by the world drug problem. There were 74 side events held on topics ranging from the flexibility of the three international drug control conventions and legislative responses to new psychoactive substances; from addressing tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS as a public health priority and considering alternative livelihoods to the use of the darknet for drug trafficking.

In Vienna, the Commission continues to act in a spirit of consensus. Through consensus, the Commission contributes to substantive dialogues among Governments and fosters international cooperation to effectively address and counter the world drug problem, despite differences in national legislative approaches and policies and despite the various challenges faced by people around the world. I welcome the constructive engagement of Member States during negotiations, which recently resulted not only in the draft outcome document (A/S-30/L.1, annex) but also in the adoption of important and innovative resolutions on, inter alia, proportionate sentencing for drug-related offences, networking within the scientific community, mainstreaming the gender perspective into drug policies, promoting standards for the treatment of drug-use disorders, and the continuing need to target new psychoactive substances and amphetamine-type stimulants.

Recently, the Commission enhanced its work following an increased number of recommendations received from the World Health Organization on the scheduling of substances pursuant to the international drug control conventions. To that end, I very much welcome the productive cooperation among the Commission, the World Health Organization and the International Narcotics Control Board. The multiple dimensions of the world drug problem and enhanced cooperation among the various stakeholders are also reflected in the draft outcome document, adopted by the Commission and transmitted for adoption at this special session. The document contains numerous calls for Member States to share with the Commission information, lessons learned, experiences and best practices.

In the outcome document, Member States commit themselves to taking the necessary steps to implement the operational recommendations, in close partnership with the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations and civil society, and to share with the Commission on Narcotic Drugs timely information on the progress made in that implementation. The Commission stands ready to provide support to Member States in their implementation of the recommendations, in follow-ups to this special session and leading up to 2019 and beyond, by continuing to work in an inclusive and comprehensive manner with all stakeholders with whom the Commission has been engaged during the preparatory process.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all Member States for their endless efforts to address and counter the world drug problem. I also thank the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for providing substantive and organizational support to the Commission. Lastly, I thank all stakeholders who have been contributing to and enriching the discussions held at the Commission for their willingness and perseverance in sharing lessons learned, experiences and views to assist Member States to have the information necessary to implement a truly comprehensive, integrated and balanced approach to the complex and multifaceted world drug problem.

The President: In accordance with resolution 70/181, I now give the floor to the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Mr. Yury Fedotov.

Mr. Fedotov (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime): The General Assembly's thirtieth special session, on the world drug problem, is a culmination of years of intensive groundwork and inclusive and frank debate, bringing together Governments, United Nations entities, scientists and civil society. It has been an honour for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to support the wide-ranging preparations led by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND). If there is a message that emerges from the many discussions held, formal and informal, and from the substantive contributions provided by United Nations partners and numerous intergovernmental bodies and non-governmental organizations, it is that the global drug policy must put people first.

Putting people first means reaffirming the cornerstone principles of the global drug control system and placing emphasis on the health and welfare of humankind, which is one of the founding purposes of the international drug control conventions. Putting people first means creating balanced approaches based on health and human rights and promoting the safety and security of all our societies. Putting people first means looking to the future and recognizing that drug policies must above all protect the potential of young people to foster healthy lifestyles and safe development. Putting people first ties responses to the world drug problem to the broader goals of the groundbreaking 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1).

Putting people first means acknowledging our common responsibility with respect to the world drug problem in all its forms and manifestations. That requires us to assist countries with limited resources and capacities to address the threat to peace, security, development and health posed by illicit drugs, including through support for alternative livelihoods, building accountable, effective judiciaries, enlarging capacities to tackle supply, and enhancing prevention and treatment services. However, our integrated and balanced approaches to the world drug problem stand little chance of succeeding if stated political commitments are not fully backed by adequate financial resources.

This special session of the General Assembly has provided a critical opportunity at a critical moment to build a more comprehensive and more collective understanding of the challenges we face together. I very much hope that the aspirational recommendations contained in the draft outcome document (A/S-30/L.1, annex) — which was adopted by consensus by the CND and is now expected to be endorsed by the Assembly — can really help to promote the urgent, united and concerted action we need so much.

As a lead entity in the United Nations system in addressing the challenges posed by the illicit drugs, UNODC remains dedicated to working with the international community to put agreed commitments into practice. We count on the political and financial support of Member States to enable us to do so effectively and efficiently. In close cooperation with our partners, UNODC will continue to support States through our global and field office programmes, which are informed by our extensive on-the-ground experience and research expertise, and to promote integrated responses at the global, interregional, regional and country levels.

We remain fully committed to helping Member States to ensure access to controlled drugs in order to relieve pain and suffering; to promote prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration approaches rooted in evidence, science, public health and human rights; to stop criminals and to prevent and counter illicit cultivation, production and traffic. We use all the tools at our disposal, as provided by the relevant conventions concerning drugs, corruption, transnational organized crime and terrorism, as well as the relevant United Nations norms, standards and guidelines to tackle related organized crime, money laundering and illicit financial flows. Member States can count on UNODC's support in the follow-up to the special session through the 2019 review and beyond.

The President: In accordance with resolution 70/181, I now give the floor to Mr. Werner Sipp, President of the International Narcotics Control Board.

Mr. Sipp (International Narcotics Control Board): It is an honour to address the Assembly today at this special session on the world drug problem in my capacity as President of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB). It is fitting that this landmark thirtieth special session should address the global drug problem, the effects of which pervade all of humankind, all regions and all spectra of our societies.

I acknowledge the extensive preparations that have been under way for this special session, including by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. Yet the work has only just begun. Deliberations over the next three days will be aimed at reviewing progress in the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, and at assessing the achievements made and challenges faced in countering the world drug problem.

The General Assembly has recognized that this special session is an opportunity for a high-level and wide-ranging discussion in the lead-up to the target date of 2019, in order to further implement the Political Declaration and Plan of Action. Indeed, the Secretary-General has encouraged Member States to use this year's special session "to conduct a wide-ranging and open debate that considers all options".

Those present have an important task ahead; they must take stock of the accomplishments and shortcomings in drug control and exchange best practices in addressing the world drug problem. The special session will map the way forward in drug policy. The INCB has contributed to this process by clarifying and highlighting the principles of the relevant conventions, identifying shortcomings in their implementation, and by making specific recommendations based upon those conventions.

The INCB's assessment of the implementation of the 2009 Political Declaration is ambivalent. Remarkable successes have been achieved through implementation of the international drug control system. For example, due to the control of the licit international trade in scheduled substances, diversions from the licit trade to the illicit market have been significantly reduced. In the past decade, efforts have been made in many countries to establish programmes for the prevention and treatment of drug abuse and to reduce the negative consequences of drug abuse. Finally, international cooperation in drug-related matters has been strengthened.

However, some of the targets of the 2009 Political Declaration have still not been met. The availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes is still not satisfactory. Globally, the illicit demand for and supply of drugs has not been significantly reduced, and we are facing the continuing emergence of new psychoactive substances. Moreover, some of the fundamental principles of the conventions and the Political Declarations are not being adequately implemented.

In the coming days, those present will have the opportunity to agree upon and commit to a course of action. In just three years' time, in 2019, the international community will review conclusively the implementation of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action and the commitments made at this special session. The next task for each representative here, upon return to his or her capital, will be to transform political will into the implementation of those commitments. In launching this call to action, allow me to emphasize that the framework for such implementation is already available — the three international drug control conventions and the Political Declarations. I will briefly highlight a few key areas where the action of the international community is required.

The promotion of the health and welfare of humankind is the ultimate goal of the drug control conventions. To that end, the State parties formulated the conventions with the aim of ensuring the availability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical and scientific purposes, while preventing their illicit cultivation and manufacture, diversion, trafficking and abuse.

There exists a grave imbalance in the availability of and access to medicines containing controlled substances. About three quarters of the global population do not have proper access to pain relief treatment. INCB has been calling on countries to close the global pain divide and ensure the availability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. In our 2015 report on availability, we made specific recommendations to Governments, and we stand ready to assist them.

Historically, drug control focused on supply reduction, but there has been growing recognition of the importance of implementing the treaties in a comprehensive, integrated and balanced manner and with full respect for human rights. Such an approach is essential to addressing the complex and multifaceted nature of the drug problem. For example, the promotion of alternative livelihoods is essential if law enforcement and eradication efforts are to be effective in the long term. Promoting social cohesion through a variety of community-based services can make a significant contribution to addressing the drug problem, especially in marginalized communities.

Investing in demand reduction — including primary prevention, education, treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration of drug users — promotes public health and well-being and also helps to reduce the potential number of users. In fact, demand reduction is perhaps the best form of supply reduction. Also, demand reduction programmes and services are cost effective in terms of reduced crime and health-care costs. The prevention of drug abuse, especially among young people, must remain the primary objective of drug control policy and practice. Preventing and reducing the adverse health and social consequences associated with drug abuse, such as the transmission of HIV among people who inject drugs, should also be an essential element of a comprehensive and balanced approach.

The evolution of drug control policy and practice in many countries over recent years, from an approach relying primarily on criminal justice and incarceration to a more health-oriented approach, is welcome. That is entirely consistent with the conventions, which provide States with some flexibility to adopt measures, such as treatment and rehabilitation, as an alternative to or in addition to criminal sanctions for offenders, mainly those suffering from drug dependency. Indeed, the international drug control conventions require proportionate responses to drug-related offences. While the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971 states that "serious offences shall be liable to adequate punishment, particularly by imprisonment", there is no treaty obligation to incarcerate drug users who have committed minor offences. The conventions provide for flexibility on the part of States in determining appropriate sanctions, including non-punitive or non-custodial measures, for instance for drug possession for personal use.

However, flexibility has limits. It does not extend to any non-medical use of drugs. Recent legislative developments in some countries that permit and regulate the non-medical use of controlled substances, in particular cannabis, are in clear contravention of the conventions. They defy the international consensus upon which international cooperation depends. The States parties to the conventions have a responsibility to address that challenge.

In recent years, we have seen a number of new drug control issues that, although not foreseen in the conventions, have to be and can be addressed within the framework of the international cooperation they provide. New psychoactive substances pose a problem for the international community in view of their continued emergence and transient nature. The INCB is working with the authorities of Member States to facilitate the sharing of information on incidents involving those substances. The Board has issued guidance to eight Governments in regard to the establishment of partnerships with the private sector for the control of precursor chemicals and to help address the emergence of so-called designer precursors. But no solution to the problem of new psychoactive substances has been found as yet.

This special session of the General Assembly is a timely opportunity to reaffirm commitment to implementing policies and practices grounded in the fundamental principles of the three conventions and the Political Declarations of 1998 and 2009, which are the principle of a balanced approach, the principle of shared responsibility, the principle of proportionality, and respect for human rights. Let me recall that the conventions never called for a war on drugs. Some of the policies that exist in some countries — and which are associated with militarized law enforcement, disregard for human rights, overincarceration, the denial of medically appropriate treatment and inhumane or disproportionate approaches — are not in accordance with the principles of the conventions.

The future of the global drug policy is not a false dichotomy between a so-called war on drugs, on the one hand, and legalization and/or regulation of non-medical use, on the other. It is also unnecessary to seek so-called new approaches. In fact, we do not really need new approaches to the global drug policy. Quite to the contrary, what we need is to better implement the principles of the drug-control treaties, which require a balanced and comprehensive approach where health and welfare are at the core of the policy.

I would like to acknowledge the efforts of the many individuals working to address the drug problem in all its facets in all countries of the world. Their efforts are key to promoting the health and welfare of humankind, the ultimate aims of our work. The International Narcotics Control Board looks forward to continuing its cooperation with Governments and civil society with a view to assisting Member States in improving the drug-control situation worldwide.

In closing, allow me to recall the collective commitment of those present to the principle of common and shared responsibility in addressing the world

drug problem. You have a personal and professional responsibility to implement the commitments made in this Hall and to prevent harm to individuals and society arising from the world drug problem. I wish members of the Assembly much success in their worthy endeavour.

The President: In accordance with resolution 70/181, I now give the floor to Ms. Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organization.

Ms. Chan (World Health Organization): The world drug problem is a prime concern for the World Health Organization (WHO), the lead United Nations agency for health. But I have to thank all Member States for according high attention to public health in the draft outcome document (A/S-30/L.1, annex).

The health and social harm caused by the illicit use of psychoactive drugs is enormous. The harm includes direct damage to the physical and mental health of users and dramatically reduces the length and quality of their lives. Drug use harms families and communities through crimes against property and people. It contributes to traffic and domestic injuries, child abuse, gender-based sexual violence and other forms of violence. Members of the Assembly know the global statistics quite well. They do not need to be reminded. Nonetheless, let me share the fact that an estimated 27 million people have drug-use disorders. More than 400,000 of them die each year. Injection-drug use accounts for an estimated 30 per cent of new HIV infections outside sub-Saharan Africa. Injection-drug use contributes significantly to epidemics of hepatitis B and hepatitis C in all regions of the world. About 10 million people who inject drugs now are infected with hepatitis C. Do members of the Assembly know how expensive it is to treat hepatitis C? It is very expensive; even the richest countries in the world cannot afford it.

In the view of WHO, drug policies that focus almost exclusively on the use of the criminal justice system need to be broadened by embracing a public-health approach. A public-health approach starts with science and starts with the evidence. It tells us several things.

First, drug use can be prevented. Drug-use disorders can be treated. Drug dependence that contributes to crime can be diminished. People with drug dependence can be helped and returned to productive roles in society. WHO promotes a comprehensive package of interventions to achieve those objectives. The evidence shows it works. Some of the most effective interventions aim to reduce the harm associated with the injection of drugs. WHO recommends the provision of sterilized injection equipment through needle and syringe programmes. WHO recommends opiate substitute therapy as the most effective treatment options for people dependent on opiates.

The evidence shows that such programmes benefit not only individuals but also entire communities, because they reduce crime and public disorder. I have a little story about that. I used to work in a city called Hong Kong. We had one of the world's most robust, liberal harm-reduction programmes. We called it the methadone replacement programme, and I would like to point out that after it was implemented, petty crime fell throughout the city. There were no more snatchings of women's gold necklaces by drug addicts driven to commit such petty crimes to feed their addiction. I speak from personal experience and I would encourage Governments to consider such programmes. They are not easy, but they work.

WHO is engaged with another dimension of the world drug problem that needs urgent attention. The international drug control conventions place a dual obligation on Governments: to prevent abuse, diversion and trafficking, but also to ensure the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes. Many controlled substances play a critical role in medical care — in pain relief and in anaesthesia, surgery and the treatment of mental disorders. Unfortunately, the obligation to prevent abuse has received far more attention that the obligation to ensure availability for medical care. WHO estimates that 80 per cent of the world's population lives in countries with zero access, or very little, to controlled medicines used for relieving moderate-to-severe pain.

As everyone here goes home after adopting the draft outcome document and begins to implement it, I urge all to remember the people, as the Deputy Secretary-General said. We must remember the right of those people to treatment and care — the right of those with cancer, dying in agony for want of pain relief; of those who want to be drug-free but who get no help from health or social services; and of the millions whose use of injected drugs adds HIV or hepatitis to their misery. WHO and its partners, especially my brother agency the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, stand ready to implement the tasks that will be assigned to us during this special session.

Item 5 of the provisional agenda

Introduction of the report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and its preparatory work

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Khaled Shamaa, Chair of the Board tasked by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs with the preparations for the special session, to introduce the report of the Commission on its preparatory work, contained in document A/S-30/4.

Mr. Shamaa (Commission on Narcotic Drugs): It is a great pleasure to address the Assembly today in my capacity as Chair of the Board established by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and tasked with the preparations for this special session.

During the special session, representatives of Member States, international organizations, civil society and other stakeholders will be able to share information and views during the general debate and in five round-table discussions, as well as at a wide variety of other events. Representatives of Member States will have the opportunity to commit to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem in all its complexity and numerous manifestations by recommending operational measures to be taken to improve the health, safety and well-being of all humankind.

Today I have the honour to present the report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on its preparatory work, as contained in document A/S-30/4. The document reflects the highlights of the past two years of commitment and intense preparatory work on the part of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in Vienna, acting in an open-ended manner. The Commission embarked on an intensive preparatory process, starting with its fifty-seventh session in March 2014, followed by the Assembly's adoption of resolution 69/200. Fourteen intersessional meetings and four formal special preparatory segments were held on the margins of the Commission's fifty-seventh, fifty-eighth and fifty-ninth sessions. In addition to formal meetings, a series of informal events was held throughout the two-year period. They included special events, consultations, informal interactive discussions and other events, in Vienna and elsewhere. We felt it was crucial to hear different perspectives that also reflected different situations, challenges and lessons learned on the ground.

Inclusiveness, openness and substantive information-sharing have been key features of the preparatory process. The Board worked closely with a wide range of stakeholders, including intergovernmental organizations, United Nations entities, regional organizations, civil society, the scientific community and, most importantly, young people. The dedication and determination of all stakeholders in their efforts to bring their experiences to the attention of Member States and one another are to be applauded. The statements, outcomes and presentations delivered at all events have been continuously posted on the website dedicated to the preparatory process, which in itself became a repository of in-depth information on approaches to the world drug problem around the globe and has enabled all to contribute to the process.

With regard to the modalities of the special session, a significant moment in the preparations took place in March 2015 at the fifty-eighth session of the Commission with the adoption of its resolution 58/8, containing the recommendations that the General Assembly acted on in its adoption of resolution 70/181. Organizational arrangements for the round tables that will be held during the special session, alongside the plenary meetings, were defined in the Commission's decision 58/16, adopted in December 2015. The modalities mirror the five interactive discussions held in March of last year during the special segment on preparations for the special session, which were also chaired by the members of the Board and supported by a panel consisting of representatives of Member States nominated by the five regional groups, civil society and United Nations entities. The Vienna interactive discussions served as a template for the five round tables that will be held during this special session and that will be dedicated to the same themes. I am greatly looking forward to the round tables and I am sure that the discussion on each topic will be as useful as it proved in Vienna last year.

As for the draft outcome document (A/S-30/L.1, annex) , the Commission began working on it in early autumn 2015. All the information gathered during the numerous events I have described, along with more than 200 pages of inputs from Member States, served as the substantive foundation for the elements paper that the Board presented on 24 September. During the first phase of negotiations, in the autumn of 2015, Member States focused on defining the main elements. In the second phase, starting in January this year, delegations

built on the elements paper by engaging in intensive, open-ended negotiations on the draft text of an outcome document, shaping its structure and substance. Finally, at its fifty-ninth session, a month ago, the Commission agreed on a draft document, entitled "Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem", and decided to transmit it to the special session and recommend its adoption.

The draft outcome document addresses the multiple dimensions of the world drug problem. It contains a comprehensive set of operational recommendations covering prevention and treatment as well as other health-related issues, including the prevention, treatment and care of HIV and AIDS; the issue of the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes; the prevention and countering of drug-related crime and its links with other forms of organized crime; human rights, including the rights of young people, children, women and communities, as well as proportionate and effective policies and responses; evolving challenges, trends and existing circumstances and emerging and persistent problems and threats, including that of new psychoactive substances; strengthening international cooperation based on the principle of common and shared responsibility; and socioeconomic issues, alternative development and viable economic alternatives.

The preparatory process has demonstrated that there can be no one-size-fits-all approach. The challenges and situations on the ground vary from region to region, within regions and from one country to another. In responding to our shared but differentiated challenges, the document contains important operational recommendations and demonstrates our common determination to address and counter collectively the various aspects of the world drug problem.

All of those challenges require our urgent attention. It is crucial to ensure that the draft outcome document is translated into concrete action on the ground, and I urge Member States, United Nations entities, civil society and all other relevant stakeholders to promote and contribute to its implementation as much as possible by taking all the steps necessary for that. I also urge everyone to share timely information with the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on progress made and results achieved in the period leading up to 2019 and beyond.

On behalf of the members of the Board, I would like to thank His Excellency Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the General Assembly, who has provided support and guidance throughout the process and with whom I have had the pleasure to work closely, as well as the President of the Assembly at its sixty-ninth session, His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa of Uganda. I would also like to thank His Excellency Ambassador Vladimir Galuška, Chair of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its fifty-ninth session, as well as his predecessor His Excellency Ambassador Arthayudh Srisamoot of Thailand, Chair of the Commission at its fifty-eighth session, for their cooperation with the Board. I also thank the secretariat of the Commission, which has been at the disposal of the Board, the Commission and delegations throughout the two-year preparatory process, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime generally, through its Executive Director, for its substantive expertise and technical support during the whole process. Finally, I am truly grateful to all the members of the Board for their hard work and commitment throughout the process.

This special session is and must be about human beings. It is our collective responsibility to make sure that our response to the world drug problem in 2016 and beyond is built on international cooperation, solidarity, common and shared responsibility and concerted international action, with the aim of promoting and ensuring the well-being of peoples and societies.

Item 6 of the provisional agenda

Organization of the session and adoption of the agenda

The President: In order to expedite the work of the thirtieth special session and in accordance with precedents, it is proposed that the Vice-Presidents of the thirtieth special session shall be the same as those of the seventieth regular session of the General Assembly.

May I take it that the Assembly agrees to that proposal?

It was so decided.

The President: Likewise, it is proposed that the Chairpersons of the Main Committees of the seventieth regular session shall serve in the same capacity at the thirtieth special session.

May I take it that the Assembly also agrees to that proposal?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Committee of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly is thus fully constituted.

I should like to draw the attention of delegations to a matter concerning the participation of the Holy See and the State of Palestine, in their capacities as observer States, in the work of the General Assembly. The observers of the Holy See will participate in the work of the thirtieth special session in accordance with Assembly resolution 58/314 of 1 July 2004, with no further need for a precursory explanation prior to their intervention. The observers of the State of Palestine will participate in the work of the thirtieth special session in accordance with Assembly resolutions 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 43/177 of 15 December 1988, 52/250 of 7 July 1998, and 67/19 of 29 November 2012, with no further need for a precursory explanation prior to their intervention.

In accordance with resolution 65/276 of 3 May 2011 and the note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/65/856, observers of the European Union will participate in the work of the thirtieth special session with no further need for a precursory explanation prior to their interventions.

I should now like to request the cooperation of representatives on the length of statements. Given the short duration of the special session and in order to hear all the speakers inscribed on the list, it would be appreciated if representatives would keep their statements in the debate as brief as possible. I would like to appeal to representatives to limit their interventions to five minutes when speaking on behalf of a group and three minutes when speaking in a national capacity. I strongly encourage speakers to adhere to those time limits.

We now turn to the adoption of the agenda. The provisional agenda of the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly is contained in document A/S-30/1. In order to expedite its work, the Assembly may wish to consider the provisional agenda directly in plenary meeting without referring it to the General Committee. May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to this procedure?

It was so decided.

The President: May I therefore take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt the provisional agenda as it appears in document A/S-30/1?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 8

Adoption of the final document

The President: The Assembly has before it a draft resolution entitled "Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem", contained in document A/S-30/L.1. The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution. May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt it?

The resolution was adopted (resolution S-30/1).

The President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote, I would remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Sargsyan (Armenia): Armenia joined the consensus on the outcome document of the General Assembly special session (resolution S-30/1, annex), which shapes the strategy for the United Nations to address the world drug problem in full conformity with all of the purposes and principles set forth in the United Nations Charter. However, my delegation would like to mention that the outcome document has failed to fully and properly reflect those principles and purposes. With all due respect to the Charter, we have to

> "develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace".

Armenia will continue to take appropriate measures to strengthen international and regional cooperation to combat the world drug problem based on respect for the principles of equal rights and the self-determination of peoples in line with the purposes of the United Nations as enshrined in its Charter.

Mr. Berset (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland, like other countries, regrets that the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex) does not address the issue of the death penalty, which is still applied by some countries for drug-related crimes. We are strongly opposed to the use of the death penalty regardless of location or circumstances.

For drug-related crimes, there is no evidence that the death penalty has a deterrent effect that is more important or more effective than other severe penalties such as long-term sentences, and, moreover, the death penalty applied for drug-related crimes does not meet the criteria for the most serious crimes, that is, crimes committed with intent to kill, pursuant to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

We share the concerns of countries facing emergency situations with respect to drug trafficking, and we are interested in having a dialogue with them on truly effective deterrents and on exemplary good practices. I would refer, for example, to the fundamental need for functional police and penitentiary institutions that are free from corruption.

Experience shows that the death penalty does not allow a country to be rid of the drug problem because that will require much more effort, more substantial efforts and other types of efforts to achieve results. Switzerland therefore invites all States Members of the United Nations that still apply the death penalty to consider a moratorium on executions, because a moratorium is a solid framework for conducting serious research into more effective means for solving the problems that exist.

Mr. De Paiva (Brazil): We warmly welcome the adoption of the outcome document of the General Assembly special session (resolution S-30/1, annex). We praise your leadership, Mr. President, as well as that of the Chair of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the work of the Board of the special session, particularly its Chair, and of all participating delegations. We see this document as an important step towards more balanced, effective and humane drug policies. It is a good basis for further progress towards 2019.

However, at this time, we would like to reaffirm Brazil's concern about the application of the death penalty to drug-related crimes. My country believes that no crime warrants the application of the death penalty, which we consider to be a human rights violation. We therefore regret that there was no agreement to address this issue in the outcome document. Brazil remains concerned about the recent increase in executions for drug-related crimes in countries that adopt the death penalty.

Respect for sovereign national decisions is a key principle for Brazil's foreign policy. That is why we would like to propose that countries, with due regard to their national realities, consider the possibility of adopting a moratorium on the application of the death penalty for drug-related crimes with a view to its final abolition. We look forward to further consideration and constructive discussions on this issue as we move towards the 2019 review of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action.

Ms. Chacón Echeverría (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation was part of the consensus that adopted resolution S-30/1 because it believes that the resolution reflects a step forward in providing new focus in and a comprehensive approach to dealing with the world drug problem. However, Costa Rica deeply regrets that the document does not include any mention of the death penalty, which is not consistent with the decision of the International Narcotics Control Board to call on countries applying the death penalty to consider its abolition in drug-related cases.

Costa Rica, the third country in the world to abolish the death penalty, opposes capital punishment on principle because it considers that it constitutes cruel and inhuman punishment that degrades the individual, violating his or her most fundamental rights such as dignity and the right to life. There is no instance or offence for which the application of the death penalty can be considered fair or justified. Moreover, our experience shows that an effective criminal justice system is possible without resorting to the death penalty.

There is no evidence whatsoever that the death penalty has a deterrent effect on crime. Any association in this regard is fallacious. With the growing support for the General Assembly resolution on the moratorium on the application of the penalty of death, and following the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's clarification that the use of the death penalty will never be consistent with the letter or spirit of the drug conventions, Costa Rica urges States that still have the death penalty in their laws to implement a moratorium on its application.

Mr. Hoie (Norway): In 2012, the General Assembly decided, by resolution 67/193, to convene a special session to review the progress in the implemtation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, including an assessment of the achievements and challenges.

Norway is satisfied to be a part of the consensus behind the outcome document of this special session (resolution S-30/1, annex). In many areas, we see positive developments, such as a stronger emphasis on health and the need to recognize different national approaches.

However, we recognize that the process failed to gather a consensus on steps that Norway views as essential for an efficient and human approach to the current and future challenges for national and global drug policy. We would have liked to see stronger language on human rights, especially with regard to the issue of the death penalty for drug-related offences and the need for more professional responses for drug offenders. The concept of harm reduction should have been recognized. We have evidence showing that those elements have an essential part in reducing the immense harm from drugs on both individuals and society.

The will of Government and the participation of civil society and a wider United Nations role is necessary to ensure an effective global drug policy that puts humans first. That requires coherence among drug control, security, human rights, public health and development policy. While the special session outcome document is a step in the right direction, those issues need to be addressed and worked on in the years ahead, while we hope for a wider recognition of their importance in 2019 and beyond. Norway intends to be a clear voice for a more progressive approach.

Mr. Romani Gerner (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*) Uruguay wishes to explain its vote and the extent to which we worked intensively with various States in the quest for this outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex), which is the product of a consensus in which we seek reflect all voices. Like many representatives who spoke before us, we deeply regret that the document does not include a moratorium on the death penalty, which is a measure that violates the most fundamental of human right of all — the right to life. It is not a question of the effectiveness of criminal law but of respect for the human rights instruments to which we are all committed under the Charter of the United Nations.

We also regret that in the debate that produced this document, there was insufficient discussion on the necessary decriminalization of the possession of controlled substances for personal use. It is not a mandate under the conventions, but rather a human right that must be protected. Furthermore, we regret that there has not been a serious, responsible balance of the Plan of Action that we had set ourselves earlier, which is now in progress.

Finally, we also regret the resistance to submitting and accepting the harm reduction strategy, which has shown so many benefits in containing troubling realities. It is also a means to strengthen cooperation and addressing the world drug problem.

Ms. Smith (Jamaica): I thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the opportunity to take the floor to explain Jamaica's position on the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex) that has just been adopted.

Jamaica supports the consensus on the outcome document, which, we acknowledge, is the result of a long and difficult negotiation process. That included multi-State consultations and inputs submitted by Member States, civil society, international organizations and United Nations agencies. Despite the wide divergence of views, we note that important advances were made, including references to the need for comprehensive and balanced strategies, alternatives to incarceration for minor drug offenses, the importance of scientific evidence in the evaluation of drug policies and alternative development and demand reduction.

Jamaica is, however, disappointed that the document does not allow countries sufficient flexibility to design our domestic policies to fit national circumstances, including the recognition of traditional uses of cannabis in our societies and as a religious sacrament. Additionally, there is no follow-up mechanism to review the global drug control architecture and make recommendations for consideration by Member States on how best to recalibrate the global response.

Although the document does not fully live up to the aspirations of Jamaica, we remain committed to continued constructive dialogue. We encourage the international community to continue to move forward and to address the world drug problem in a manner that reflects contemporary and evolving realities.

Mr. Budiman (Indonesia): First, let me welcome the adoption of the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex), which represents an important milestone toward 2019.

On another note, we would like to put on record the following principle positions of our delegation concerning important issues with regard to the death

penalty. We have to reiterate that there is no international consensus on the abolition of the death penalty. The death penalty is not prohibited under international law. The application of the death penalty is a criminal justice matter for individual States, to be decided by the competent authorities. In other words, every State has the sovereign right to decide on its own justice system, taking into account its own circumstances. Every State has the sovereign right to choose its own political, economic, social and legal system, based on what is in its own best interest. Yet it is clear that the initiator of this matter in this forum has decided that only one view on the issue should be respected. We would like to clearly reiterate that the death penalty is an important component of our Administration's law and system of justice. It is imposed only for the most serious crimes and serves as a deterrence.

We are all here today because the world drug problem continues to pose a threat to the safety and security of all. Drug production and transportation are like a major sophisticated multinational cooperation run by ruthless syndicates that trade the lives of their victims for profit. We often overlook those victims. Traffickers enforce immense penalties on their victims, including the death penalty. We have proper legal safeguards in place that take into account national policies that prevent any miscarriage of justice.

The following States wish to place on record their support for this statement: Bahrain, Brunei Darussalam, China, Egypt, Iran, Kuwait, Malaysia, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sudan, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the explanation of vote.

We will now hear statements after the adoption of the resolution. I give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Mimica (European Union): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union and its member States and the following countries, which align themselves with this statement — Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Cabo Verde, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Namibia, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, the Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine, Uruguay and Uzbekistan — in order to speak on the issue of the death penalty in relation to the adoption of the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex).

We deeply regret that the outcome document does not include language on the death penalty. We have a strong and unequivocal opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances. We consider that the death penalty undermines human dignity and that errors made in its application are irreversible. Moreover, imposing the death penalty for drug offences is against the norms of international law, specifically paragraph 2 of article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The unprecedented support generated by General Assembly resolution 69/186, on a moratorium on the use of the death penalty, which was adopted in December 2014, signaled that there is an international momentum behind efforts to limit the application of the death penalty, including in terms of the number of offences for which it is imposed.

We urge all States that have not done so to implement a moratorium on the use of the death penalty as a step towards its final abolition. Furthermore, we welcome the decision of the International Narcotics Control Board to call on countries still applying the death penalty to consider its abolition for drug-related offences and a statement from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime that the use of the death penalty has never been in the letter or the spirit of the international drug control conventions. We also encourage Member States to adopt safeguards to prevent criminal justice or other forms of international assistance resulting in a death sentence being applied and to hold international agencies to account for compliance with this and all other human rights obligations.

The President: We have thus concluded our consideration of agenda item 8.

Agenda item 7

General debate

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Jimmy Morales, President of the Republic of Guatemala.

President Morales (*spoke in Spanish*): In the so-called war on drugs, countries such as Guatemala have borne the worst part in enduring the unfair burden of the loss of human lives.

I can honestly say that Guatemala has complied with its international obligations, joining the struggle

despite our extremely limited resources and to the detriment of our investments in health, education and development. Therefore, together with Colombia and Mexico, we proposed this special session of the General Assembly as an historic opportunity not only to reflect critically on the effectiveness and challenges of the global drug policy, but also to redirect, improve and deepen international cooperation regarding this problem.

We are aware that the expected outcomes of the current global policy have not been fully achieved, that there are undesired effects and that progress has been limited. We also know that this policy should be adapted to the new realities that arise in order to address the challenges in each region and each country. In view of that, it is worth asking ourselves: If our resources are extremely limited and our social needs extremely great, what should we prioritize?

Guatemala has fostered and facilitated an open and pluralistic dialogue, taking into account the realities and interests of all countries and seeking agreements in favour of a more effective and humane drug policy. Thus we welcome the progress achieved. I wish to highlight three key points.

First, the reaffirmation that the health and welfare of humankind are the objective of the international drug control conventions can lead us to prioritize a humane approach, focused on public health and not on merely punitive responses. Second is the acknowledgement that drug policies should be consistent with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, placing people, not substances, at the centre of those policies. Third is the recognition that the international conventions are sufficiently flexible to allow countries to implement drug policies according to their priorities and needs, meaning that each State may sovereignly decide the policy that best meets its realities, challenges and specific interests.

One of the most important changes that the current drug policy needs today is for us to give priority to the reduction in demand rather than focusing solely on a reduction in supply. We must ensure drug-policy comprehensiveness. In that regard, we welcome the balance that is beginning to emerge in some developed countries. At the same time, we believe that such an approach should be a priority for the international community towards developing countries.

I must stress that, in the search for a comprehensive and balanced policy, our country will also begin to diversify the international cooperation that we receive with regard to drug policy towards important areas such as sustainable human development, including alternative development, as well as the care, treatment and rehabilitation of problematic users and the prevention of consumption in general.

Finally, we are aware that the process is only beginning, and we have faith that the outcome document that we have adopted (resolution S-30/1, annex) is a first step that will lead us to a global policy in which human beings will be the most important element.

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Enrique Peña Nieto, President of the United Mexican States.

President Peña Nieto (*spoke in Spanish*): The United Nations is the highest forum in which to address and overcome the global challenges of our times. That is why, in 2012, Colombia, Guatemala and Mexico called for the convening of this special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem. The goal is to review the current international strategy and, above all, define the better solutions from a human rights perspective and in terms of prevention and public health, which would put the well-being of individuals at the centre.

We cannot deny that in recent years the terms of the debate have changed. A consensus is beginning to emerge in favour of meaningful reform of the international drug regime. A new approach is taking shape that resolutely fights criminals, but rather than criminalizing the consumers, it gives them opportunities and alternatives. With firmness we must continue doing what has worked. With flexibility we must change what has not produced results. The approach essentially based on prohibition — the so-called war on drugs that began in the 1970s — has not succeeded in diminishing the worldwide production, trafficking or consumption of drugs.

Drug trafficking continues to be one of the most lucrative activities of organized crime and a decisive factor in its transnational growth. Inevitably, the illegal trade in narcotics has led to death and violence, mainly in producer and transit countries. For decades, Mexico has been one of the countries that has been most committed to dealing with the problem of drugs. My country is one of the nations that has paid a high

price — too high a price — in terms of the loss of its peace, suffering and the loss of human lives — of children, young people, women and adults. Like few others, we know the limits and the painful implications of the essentially prohibitionist paradigm.

For that reason, during my Administration, we have been seeking to deal with the drug phenomenon in a more integrated way, with a strategy that seeks to avoid generating violence and in which almost all sectors of the Government of Mexico take part. To reduce the supply of drugs, we have faced up to organized crime through better coordination between our authorities, the use of intelligence systems and the dismantling of its operational and financial structures. In that way, we have managed to arrest the main criminal leaders, and we have reduced the violence in specific regions of our country, which has led to reduced crime rates. Furthermore, through the use of technology and information, we are finding, identifying and destroying drug crops and drug laboratories. At the same time, in order to reduce domestic demand, we have strengthened prevention efforts among children and youth, as well as the treatment of addictions. That approach has been backed up with social prevention of violence and crime in vulnerable communities.

Nevertheless, despite the efforts that have been made and the results that have been achieved, we are not totally free from the criminal threat while the international demand for drugs is growing. Within the current paradigm, consumer countries must do more, both in reducing their demand and in combating transnational organized crime. The scale, sophistication and corrupting power of criminal groups are also present at and within the borders of the consumer countries where the final sale takes place. To confront this situation with global responsibility, Mexico puts forth the following proposals.

First, the world drug problem requires that the international community endorse the principle of common and shared responsibility through more intense and effective international cooperation. In a globalized world, drugs are also a global issue that concerns all nations. No country can address this scourge by itself. Moreover, the divergence among the public policies of each country makes it difficult to have cooperation and achieve results. Therefore, we need global consensus, or at least consensus at the hemispheric level, to address the problem of drugs effectively.

Second, we must strengthen the common front against transnational organized crime so that it does not have room to carry out its financial operations and related crimes. We must strengthen cooperation among our Governments and expand the exchange of information and joint actions to dismantle criminal organizations.

My third point is that better coordination and collaboration among the United Nations specialized agencies is necessary in order to address all aspects of the global drug problem. Through their different mandates and with a greater cooperation among them, entities such as the United Nations Office or Drugs and Crime, the International Narcotics Control Board, the United Nations Development Programme, UN-Women and the World Health Organization should support Member States in implementing the best strategies, policies and programmes to deal with drugs.

Fourth, the public policies and actions based on the international drug policy should be aligned with the sustainable development efforts under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). The Sustainable Development Goals and efforts aimed at resolving the global problem of drugs must be complementary and mutually reinforcing.

The fifth point is that we should deal with the social damage associated with the illicit drug market. For those communities affected by organized crime, we need an integrated effort for the prevention of violence, exclusion and the weakening of the social fabric. We must support the affected communities with educational, employment and recreational alternatives that strengthen social inclusion and cohesion. In particular, we must create productive alternatives in those areas where narcotics are grown, for example, crop substitution and international agriculture contract programmes.

Sixth, given the limitations of the prohibitionist paradigm, we must address the global issue of drugs from the perspective of human rights. Only in that way can we offer more comprehensive and balanced responses that promote development. This fundamental change involves modifying the eminently punitive approach so as to put individuals, their rights and their dignity — not the substances or legal processes — at the centre of our efforts.

Seventh, drug use should be addressed essentially as a public health problem, since it constitutes a threat to

the full development of people, especially our children and young people. Drug addiction must be addressed through comprehensive prevention mechanisms and therapeutic solutions, not penal instruments that criminalize consumers and damage the development of their personality.

Eighth, in drug-related offenses, we must have sentences that are in proportion to the crime and alternatives to imprisonment that also incorporate a gender perspective. Disproportionate sanctions that punish women and children in vulnerable situations, far from solving the problem, generate vicious cycles of exclusion and criminality. Furthermore, treatment, education, rehabilitation and social reintegration services should be provided to the prison population.

Ninth, we need international efforts to prevent drug use through a campaign directed at children and young people at a global level. We must protect the most vulnerable members of our societies, ensuring that they know the negative effects associated with drug consumption and the use of psychotropic substances.

The tenth point is that we should ensure the availability of and better access to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, at the same time avoiding their diversion, misuse, and trafficking. That proposal stems from the broad national debate on the use of marijuana, which the Government of Mexico convened, with experts, academics and representatives of civil society.

As President of Mexico, at this special session I want to give a voice to those who expressed the need to update the regulatory framework to authorize the use of marijuana for medical and scientific purposes. Participants in those forums also expressed the importance of increasing, in accordance with international standards, the amount of marijuana that can be considered for personal use in order to not criminalize consumers. In the coming days, the Government of Mexico will outline the specific actions to be taken to that end, in accordance with the principles of public health and human rights that we have proposed in this special session. Therefore, from this rostrum, from the highest forum of the international community, I acknowledge the experts, academics and representatives of civil society who have contributed ideas and guidance towards a new consensus.

The world drug problem is a phenomenon that knows no borders and harms societies throughout the world. So far, the responses that have been implemented by the international community have, frankly, been inadequate. I trust that this special session will provide a new international understanding on this matter. It is my hope that this dialogue will enable us to begin generating the vision, tools and new consensus that we need to counter the drug phenomenon in the twenty-first century. Together, we can find solutions. We must move beyond prohibition to effective prevention and regulation. Thousands of lives depend on it.

The President: The Assembly will now hear a statement by Her Excellency Ms. Ana Helena Chacón, Vice-President of the Republic of Costa Rica.

Ms. Chacón (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to convey the solidarity of the people of Costa Rica with the brotherly countries of Ecuador and Japan in the tragedies that they are facing. We also wish to express our deepest condolences to Afghanistan on the new terrorist attack that has just taken place there.

Costa Rica aligns itself with the statement to be made by the Minister of State of the Dominican Republic on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

My delegation wishes to thank you, Mr. President, as well as the Board tasked with organizing this special session.

Similarly, my country wishes to thank Mexico for its leadership, as, along with Colombia and Guatemala, it pushed for the convening of this event. Costa Rica supported this initiative from the outset, because it believes that in the light of the new shared challenges and the meagre results of the current strategy, an open and inclusive debate is needed, one based on the best interdisciplinary evidence available that would enable us to focus our efforts on designing and implementing plans, policies and actions to address the world drug problem with a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach centred centred on the human being. Without doubt, the convening of this session represents a genuine turning point towards a more socially oriented policy with a human face in addressing the drug phenomenon. We reiterate that there is plenty of evidence to show that the past 50 years of repressive policies and the war on drugs have still not provided the solution.

Although Costa Rica is pleased to see the consensus achieved in the recommendations negotiated in Vienna, and although we are pleased that the document embodies

the commitment of States to tackle a phenomenon that is far from being under control, we must bear in mind that for the sake of consensus, elements crucial to a truly comprehensive approach were left out of the document. In that connection, Costa Rica wishes to emphasize that if we really wish to reduce the adverse effects of this scourge, it is essential to deal with issues that were not mentioned in the document, such as new approaches, harm reduction, proportionality in sentencing, the non-use of the death penalty, the effectiveness of policies and the formation of a panel of experts to study and guide our strategies. Similarly, the document should not be considered an end in itself, but rather as a point of departure for developing and fostering more comprehensive and effective policies.

Costa Rica has never punished consumption as a crime. Our approach has always been from the perspective of prevention and health. We use 60 per cent of the funds seized from drug trafficking to finance projects in the fields of prevention and treatment. More recently, we have reformed our criminal laws to include a focus on gender and proportionality, which allows us to reduce prison sentences for vulnerable women.

However, no country can effectively deal with drug trafficking alone, given its transnational nature. From the perspective of cooperation, the inclusion of reciprocal legal assistance is essential for our region, which also requires cooperation to implement the social and public-health measures needed to deal with this problem comprehensively. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the interregional work being carried out under the Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism on Drugs between the European Union and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and the Cooperation Programme on Drugs Policies, between Latin America and the European Union, which provide an opportunity to place human beings at the centre of our drug policies.

Although the outcome document that we have adopted (resolution S-30/1, annex) comes as a welcome step and reflects some of the new pathways that we should take in the international debate on the world drug problem, we still have more work to do. That must be reflected in actions that enable us to place our countries on the path of egalitarian, inclusive and sustainable development, in accordance with the commitments adopted in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). Costa Rica will therefore promote such cooperation and is already committed to working actively and constructively in this special session, as well as in the follow-up. I hope we can meet again on this subject after having achieved more results than what we have achieved together so far as a region and as a hemisphere.

The President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Isabel de Saint Malo de Alvarado, Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Panama.

Mrs. De Saint Malo de Alvarado (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Given its geographical position, Panama has historically been a unique crossroads and a point of convergence on the planet. The connectivity that our country provides benefits countries in our hemisphere and serves as a bridge to other countries. Nevertheless, and sadly, those same advantages have made Panama an attractive route for those who plan, develop and commit unlawful acts, especially those related to drug trafficking. That has meant that our country has had to expend extraordinary efforts to combat the ever-growing shipments of illicit substances and the money derived from that trade and related activities.

The Republic of Panama, aware of its responsibilities to the international community, has implemented a series of strategies to combat the scourges of drug trafficking and organized crime. Our commitment to mitigating those scourges, which limit the development of our peoples, is very strong. Another threat that we face comes from the groups that work outside the law, a phenomenon that has emerged as a result of domestic conflicts in neighbouring countries. The steps that we are taking as a region to put a definitive end to those conflicts have, unfortunately, also led to the appearance of criminal gangs.

Despite the vigorous efforts that Panama is expending to combat drug trafficking and organized crime, it is suffering the consequences of the substantial increase in drug production in countries in the region and the transfer of drugs from where they are produced to where they are sold and consumed throughout our territories. As a result of our efforts in that area, we can point out that, over the past 10 years, we have been able to confiscate more than 400 tons of illicit substances, including 57 tons seized in 2015. That is a world record in terms of confiscation and has made the Republic of Panama the country with the third largest volume of seizures in the world.

This fight against the transfer of drugs from producing countries to countries that are large consumers, and against the border groups and their consequent configuration as criminal gangs, has meant that the Panamanian nation has to allocate a considerable part of its national budget to dealing with rhose crimes, rather than being able to use them for its other needs in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). In doing so, the Government of Panama has demonstrated its commitment to transparency and its commitment to combating illegal and criminal activities, even when they do not originate in its territory.

That is why we would like to reiterate that, motivated by the multilateral instruments that deal with combating those scourges, we have been modifying our legislation in accordance with the standards promoted by international agencies, such as the Financial Action Task Force, which has led Panama to develop modern and effective standards that allow us to prevent and combat money-laundering in our international financial centre. Panama, with a strong economy based on services, is implementing various measures to avoid and prevent our financial system from being used for illegal purposes. As we do this, we have been implementing due diligence and have enforced the know-your-client principle so as to prevent money-laundering, the funding of terrorism and many other criminal activities, in accordance with the legislation and international agreements ratified by the Panamanian State.

From this rostrum, I wish to assure the world of Panama'a commitment to the highest international standards of transparency. We will do everything we can to ensure that the world is aware of our efforts, which are currently being unfairly deprecated through the release of documents that wrongly carry the name of my country.

Among the other efforts we are making, I would like to share with delegations the fact that we have organized a regional inter-agency security centre, whose main purpose will be to serve as a centre for merging international intelligence, which will facilitate the exchange of information and the production of strategic knowledge on security issues.

With regard to health policies, the Panamanian State has maintained an upright position with regard to the importance of the use of controlled substances for medical purposes. Dealing with the issue of drugs is a fundamental part of public management, and we are tackling it through a focus on people rather than on substances, with a broad scope from the promotion of health to social reintegration.

The individual efforts of our countries will be ineffective unless we deal with the scourge of drugs in a coordinated manner at the global level. Panama reiterates its commitment to that end, toward a response based on solidarity and cooperation.

I would like to close by saying that Panama is a country that serves the world, a noble country with strong convictions, and our actions are a testament to that. We are a safe and trustworthy country. We are much more than just a source of documents. We are a country committed to fairness and transparency with a strong calling to serve. We are a country that, as the motto of our official seal says, is always at the service of humankind.

The President: Before we proceed, I want to inform the General Assembly that I was just informed by the Afghan Ambassador that an explosion in Kabul involving a truck filled with explosives has killed as many as 28 people and wounded 327. On behalf of the General Assembly I want to convey our condolences to the Government and people of Afghanistan and to those who lost their loved ones in this terrible terror attack in Afghanistan.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Guo Shengkun, State Counselor and Minister for Public Security of China.

Mr. Guo Shengkun (China) (*spoke in Chinese)*: We gather here to discuss strategies and actions to counter the drug problem. This meeting demonstrates the international community's determination to rectify the problem and deepen cooperation. China applauds the extraordinary work done by the Board for the special session and will work with other countries for the successful conclusion of the session and will fully implement the outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex).

For many years, the international community has been making unremitting efforts to control drugs, with encouraging results. A full-fledged international drug control system has been established, a global framework with the three international conventions as the centerpiece has taken shape, and a Political Declaration and Plan of Action have been formulated. On the other

hand, global drug control still faces formidable and complex challenges; the fight remains an uphill battle. China will remain committed to the principle of broad participation and shared responsibility and will fully implement the comprehensive, integrated and balanced international counter-narcotics strategy.

In view of recent developments, China would like to call for greater international efforts in the following five areas.

The first is to forge partnerships based on equality and mutual benefit. It is important that countries honour the principle of sovereign equality, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, and avoid injecting political factors into anti-narcotics efforts or using drug control as a pretext to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. The international community should embrace a mindset of win-win cooperation, forge global partnerships and build a community based on a shared destiny for humankind in combating the drug problem.

Secondly, the drug control system must be improved through shared responsibility and common efforts. While international drug control agencies need to play a leading role, the producer, transit and consumer countries, as well as those affected by the drug menace, should share the responsibility for narcotics control. It is important to mobilize and involve international and non-governmental organizations and civil society in countering the drug problem so as to create a situation where drug control agencies play a leading role, national Governments share responsibilities and society as a whole becomes actively involved.

Thirdly, an integrated and balanced drug control strategy must be pursued in the light of national conditions. The fundamental role of the three conventions in the international drug control system needs to be solidified and brought into full play. Any form of legalization of narcotics should be resolutely opposed. We need to respect and support countries in introducing laws, policies and strategic measures in the light of their respective conditions. We must continue to implement a drug control strategy that is integrated, balanced and based on scientific evidence and must uphold the authority, consistency and inclusiveness of our drug policies.

Fourthly, we must form mechanisms for standardized, practical and efficient operations. Countries should carry out joint actions in combating drug-related crimes, step up international and regional law enforcement cooperation and establish standardized, practical and efficient mechanisms for intelligence-sharing, case-based cooperation, anti-money laundering and mutual legal assistance. International control measures and verification systems should be strictly enforced and strengthened to tighten the control of precursors at the source and prevent the spread of new psychoactive substances.

Fifthly, we must pursue shared development and progress through joint efforts. Countries must uphold the spirit of cooperation and trust and advance anti-narcotic endeavours through mutual assistance. Developed countries should provide funding and technical assistance to developing countries and vigorously pursue alternative development strategies to improve the lives of people in areas where narcotics plants are cultivated. All countries should be guided by the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, live up to their commitments and duly contribute to the global fight against drugs.

The Chinese Government attaches great importance to the fight against narcotics. For years we have carried out people's campaigns against drugs, and we have achieved notable progress. In the past decade we cracked down on more than 1 million drug crime cases and seized 751 tons of drugs. There has been a total of 950,000 cases of community-level treatment and rehabilitation and 1.21 million cases of compulsory isolation for rehabilitation, and more than 1.2 million ex-users have avoided relapse within a three-year period. The Chinese Government has spent ¥1.6 billion on alternative cultivation in Myanmar and the northern part of Laos, which now covers an area of 3.5 million Chinese mu, equaling more than 233,000 hectares.

The Chinese Government is firmly committed to fighting drugs. China will act on President Xi Jingping's instructions, actively implement anti-drug policies and strive to win the people's campaigns. China will continue to support the work of the United Nations counter-narcotic agencies, take an active part in international and regional cooperation and jointly combat relevant transnational crimes. We will continue to promote sustainable alternative development and provide as much assistance as we can to help relevant countries. We stand ready to work with the international community to build partnerships for mutual benefit, to

advance the cause of drug control and to work tirelessly for the health, safety and well-being of mankind.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ali Hasanov, Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan.

Mr. Hasanov (Azerbaijan) (*spoke in Russian*): Since it became independent, Azerbaijan has signed all United Nations conventions, and we have established a modern legal framework in our country. Azerbaijan cooperates closely with the United Nations and its structures; the Council of Europe; the Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova Group; and the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre.

I wish to point out that the current methods in the fight against drug addiction and narcotics need to be reviewed. Given that organized criminal groups are finding new ways to secure their profits, markets and consumers, drug prevention efforts should also be modernized. The outcome document adopted at this special session of the General Assembly (resolution S-30/1, annex) should play a substantive role in moving forward our joint efforts to combat this evil.

In recent years we have been implementing large-scale international construction projects in our country. We have seen growth in international transit and have attracted foreign citizens to our country. That in turn has generated interest among international drug gangs to bring in drugs and to use Azerbaijan as a transit country. Analysis shows that more than 95 per cent of the drugs found by our law enforcement agencies arrive in our country from the south. The most recent such cases were in March and April of this year, when we found and confiscated about one ton of heroin from trucks transiting through Azerbaijan.

Mr. Alrowaiei (Bahrain), Vice-President, took the Chair.

As is known, for 24 years about 20 per cent of Azerbaijan's territory has been occupied by the armed forces of Armenia. As a result, our country, which has a population of 10 million, has about 1 million refugees and internally displaced persons. Furthermore, as a result of that aggression 132 kilometres of our southern State borders are controlled by Armenia. Drugs are being grown in the territories occupied by the Armenian forces, and there are special laboratories to process these drugs. They are then sent off to various countries. The law enforcement agencies of our country have a significant database that has been submitted to the relevant United Nations bodies.

Essentially, combating the drug problem is based on respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity. In that connection, the Republic of Azerbaijan calls upon the international community to put pressure on Armenia in order to ensure that it fulfils the four relevant Security Council resolutions that have been adopted since 1993, demanding the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian armed forces from the occupied territory in Azerbaijan. The Republic of Azerbaijan will continue to closely cooperate with neighbouring and other States in the exchange of experience and information in the fight against drugs.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Fidias Aristy, Minister of State and President of the National Council on Drugs of the Dominican Republic, who will speak on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Aristy (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the high honour to speak on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

Recently, during the third Ministerial Meeting of CELAC on the world drug problem, held in Santo Domingo, we stated that addressing the world drug problem is a common and shared responsibility that requires effective international cooperation, as well as comprehensive, multidisciplinary and balanced policies and strategies to reduce both supply and demand. Those should be in line with national legislation and the three United Nations conventions on drugs, as well as other relevant international instruments, in full respect of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and with particular regard to respect for national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

We emphasize that all drug policies must incorporate in an integral manner the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in accordance with the spirit and purpose of safeguarding the health and welfare of humankind. We express concern about the impact of the world drug problem on the health of people and on democratic institutions, and its serious economic effect and the social damages it causes. For that reason, we deem it necessary to continue to strengthen international cooperation and the exchange of good

practices, promoting and boosting comprehensive and balanced policies on this issue.

We reaffirm before the Assembly that it is necessary to adopt effective and practical drug prevention measures, in particular measures to prevent illegal drug use among children and adolescents. That includes developing appropriate prevention programmes based on scientific evidence, fundamentally in the education system at all levels, as well as promoting opportunities to enable a healthy life within the family and social circles.

CELAC emphasizes that it is necessary to strengthen international cooperation as the central axis of efforts to address the world drug problem, including the provision of greater financial and logistical resources to the countries that require them, especially transit countries, in order to increase their capacity to counter drug trafficking. We recognize the need to improve the capacity of States to incorporate into their strategies the prevention, detection and sanctioning of organized crime devoted to activities of illegal drug trafficking and related crimes.

CELAC reaffirms that public policies aimed at addressing the word drug problem should be designed and implemented with a gender focus. Those policies should also recognize the situation of exclusion experienced by the most vulnerable groups in our societies, in particular people of African descent, indigenous peoples and other minorities, and the sexually diverse population. We express the need to address the situation of drug users comprehensively, through measures that take into account their full development, in accordance with national legislation, the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant international instruments.

CELAC reiterates the importance of strengthening alternative, comprehensive and sustainable development programmes, including prevention programmes, in the framework of national policies and based on the United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development. Along with other solutions, they represent an effective strategy and basic tool offering a significant and feasible way of reducing illicit drug crop cultivation and guiding sustainable urban development policies in line with specific national requirements for those affected by illegal drug-related activities.

We reaffirm our commitment to promoting bilateral, triangular and regional cooperation among CELAC States. We reiterate our decision to reinforce criminal prosecution of those involved in drug-trafficking activities and transnational organized crime, sharing experiences and best practices on new trends and modalities in drug trafficking and money-laundering and comprehensively addressing the challenges posed by new substances, methamphetamines and other synthetic drugs that are not yet under international control and scrutiny.

CELAC emphasizes that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) calls for aligning international efforts and policies, including those related to drugs, with a view to promoting development, inclusion, a mainstreamed approach to gender, and people's well-being in every area. We reiterate our rejection of unilateral lists and certifications issued by developed countries that affect Latin American and Caribbean countries, particularly those relating to drug trafficking and similar measures.

We recognize the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, with its subsidiary bodies, as the main United Nations regulatory body with regard to drug-related matters, together with the International Narcotics Control Board. We also acknowledge the role of the World Health Organization, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations Development Programme and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, among other entities, within their respective mandates and in the context of the process of the General Assembly's special session.

The members of CELAC reaffirm their commitment to continuing these discussions and following up in order to expand and continue the dialogue and regional consensus with a view to 2019, in accordance with the Political Declaration and the Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Neven Mimica, Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development of the European Commission, who will speak on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. Mimica (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Albania;

the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union and its member States welcome the opportunity that this much-needed debate affords to address the world drug problem. We welcome the rebalancing of global drug policies in the direction of a sound, multidisciplinary public health and human rights approach. Effective drug policies must be based on evidence and reliable monitoring systems. The role of civil society and the scientific community must be recognized. It is important that the different needs of men, women, children and young and vulnerable people are adequately treated. The European Union has a long-standing commitment on all these issues.

We reiterate our strong commitment to the United Nations drug control conventions, which form the cornerstones of the global response to the world drug problem. They provide sufficient scope and flexibility to accommodate a wide range of approaches in accordance with national and regional specificities. The European Union strongly supports the anchoring of drug policy in a wider socioeconomic context, in line with the Sustainable Development Agenda (see resolution 70/1), so as to promote health, democracy, the rule of law and sustainable livelihoods. In order to tackle the root causes of the illicit cultivation of drug crops, alternative development should be actively promoted to provide alternative and sustainable livelihoods and to reduce the dependence of affected communities on illicit drug economies.

The European Union fully supports the call for enhanced coordination between the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime — the agency with principal responsibility in this area — and other United Nations entities and specialized agencies, notably the World Health Organization, the International Narcotics Control Board, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and the Human Rights Council. We welcome strengthened international cooperation aimed at countering drug trafficking and its links with corruption, organized crime and, in some cases, terrorism. We are firmly committed to addressing the growing threats posed by new psychoactive substances and the use of the Internet for drug trafficking. The European Union will also continue to participate fully in preventing the diversion of precursors.

Human rights are an integral part of any response to the drug problem. Consequently, we fully support proportionate sentencing for drug-related offences and the promotion of alternatives to incarceration and coercive sanctions. We deeply regret, however, that the outcome document we have just adopted (resolution S-30/1, annex) does not address the abolition of the death penalty for drug offences. The European Union is strongly and unequivocally opposed to the death penalty in all circumstances, since it undermines human dignity and fails to act as a deterrent to criminal behaviour.

The ultimate objective of the international drug control system is the protection of public health. Policies to reduce the demand for drugs must include the full range of measures, from prevention and treatment to social reintegration and recovery. Measures to reduce risks and harm should be further promoted and implemented, since they have proven to be effective in many countries all over the world in preventing overdose deaths and the transmission of HIV, viral hepatitis and other blood-borne diseases,

All of those elements are of defining importance ahead of the high-level meeting to be held in 2019 to review the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. We need a firm commitment from all parties if we are to effectively implement the renewed approach of the United Nations to the world drug problem and put into practice our operational recommendations. That is what our citizens expect from all of us.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Bent Høie, Minister of Health and Care Services of Norway, who will speak on behalf of the Pompidou Group.

Mr. Høie (Norway): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the 37 States members of the Pompidou Group. The Pompidou Group is the entity within the Council of Europe that works to uphold its core values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

The Pompidou Group deems it extremely important and relevant to remind the Assembly that a drug policy — like all other policy fields — must be developed, implemented and evaluated in a manner that takes into account and fully respects fundamental

human rights. The Pompidou Group notes that human rights have been highlighted in the outcome document of this special session on the world drug problem, entitled "Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem" (resolution S-30/1, annex). The Group expects that the follow-up process will take human rights concerns fully into account and contribute to the task of defining the impact of human rights on drug policies where that is unclear. The Pompidou Group welcomes the fact that the outcome document is based on the concept of a balanced approach to drug policies.

In the follow-up process, at both the international and the national levels, the relevant authorities need to perform objective and continuous monitoring and evaluation of the efforts to reduce drug problems in order to assess whether there are imbalances to be rectified. The Pompidou Group expects that the follow-up process will include scientific work and evidence-based practical tools aimed at enabling Member States to evaluate the cost-benefit ratio of the various measures they implement at the national level.

The Pompidou Group takes this opportunity to highlight a few areas where human rights need to shape and impact the drug policies of the international community. It is evident that drug users should enjoy the same rights under the existing international human rights instruments as all other persons.

First and foremost, the application of the death penalty for drug-related offences does not accord with human rights obligations. Secondly, the application of inhumane punishment and torture for drug-related offences does not accord with human rights obligations. Thirdly, drug-users have an uncontested right to equitable access to health-care services for their drug addiction and other drug- or non-drug-related health problems.

The Pompidou Group expects the follow-up process to the special session to take those concerns fully into account. The Group expects relevant actors to work dedicatedly towards abolishing the use of the death penalty for drug-related offences and the use of inhumane punishment and torture and towards ensuring access to treatment and rehabilitation, as well as measures to reduce risks and harmful measures for the benefit of all, including those incarcerated, in order to minimize the health and social consequences of drug use.

The Pompidou Group welcomes the follow-up process to this special session. The Group underscores its expectation that there will be an open debate where human rights would be recognized as a fundamental element for a coherent and balanced drug policy. Such a policy should promote awareness of both the positive and the unintended effects of the various measures that are implemented to address the world drug problem.

I should now like to make the following statement in my national capacity.

The preparations for this event have been long and intense. My thanks go to all those involved. The draft of the special session's outcome document agreed to in Vienna last month was an important step. Norway had, however, hoped for a more forward-looking outcome.

The special session process has attracted enormous attention and interest. It provides an excellent basis for our preparations for the next special session, in 2019. We are pleased that the international debate has increasingly placed a focus on health and well-being. Human rights must inspire all our work. We are pleased to note that human rights have been reflected in the outcome document, although Norway would have liked to see stronger language. We regret that it was not possible to agree on language on the death penalty. Norway is strongly opposed to the death penalty and will continue to work for its abolition.

Moreover, we have seen positive developments regarding access to controlled medicines. The problem relating to lack of availability, acceptability and affordability needs to be acknowledged as a first step. We need to fully ensure the availability of such controlled medicines for those in need. The outcome document welcomes, as do we, the Sustainable Development Goals as complementary measures that reinforce drug control, and recommends the use of relevant human-development indicators.

While there have been positive developments, some issues are still not being dealt with adequately.

First, we had expected that the reduction of risks would be recognized, accepted and included in the document. However, we do recognize that the outcome document includes references to programmes compatible with that approach: nalaxone and overdose prevention, medication-assisted therapy programmes and injecting-equipment programmes.

Eighteen years have passed since the previous General Assembly special session on drugs in 1998. We still face huge challenges on almost all measurable indicators. Have we sufficiently understood why our approach has failed to meet our stated goals and what it is that we need in order to readdress the drug challenge?

The world drug problem is a multifaceted phenomenon. A successful approach requires coordinated contributions from several sectors at the local, national and international levels. We must think health in all policies. Real development and the participation of the wider United Nations are necessary in order to ensure an effective global drug policy that puts humans first. That requires coherence among drug control and security, human rights and public health, as well as a development policy. The Secretary-General should lead the necessary work, which should be implemented at the most senior level in the Secretariat. Continued and strengthened civil society involvement will also be a key factor.

As we head towards the 2019 special session, we need to be more ambitious. Some elements of our approach have worked well but need to be strengthened. Other aspects must be questioned. New elements must be submitted to an open-minded debate. Our ultimate goal — to promote health in every policy — must inform our debate to a larger extent than it has so far.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Geoffrey Onyeama, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Mr. Onyeama (Nigeria): At the outset, I would like to state for the record, in the spirit of collaboration, cooperation and consensus-building, that Nigeria aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the Sudan on behalf of the African Group.

The nature and character of the contemporary world drug problem are becoming increasingly complex and severe. It is therefore pertinent to discuss the factors that have impacted both the illicit drug supply and demand reduction. The latter, we believe, remains the most effective way of tackling the world drug problem. That is why we consider the holding of this special session a significant milestone. Nigeria therefore stands ready to join forces with all stakeholders in order to achieve those objectives.

Nigeria recognizes that the challenges will require an integrated, multidimensional, balanced and comprehensive approach by the international community, because no single methodology can provide solutions for addressing the different aspects of the world drug problem.

The consequences of drug abuse continue to ravage families, communities and the society at large in our region. The abuse of drugs also continues to undermine efforts aimed at promoting and achieving sustainable development. That is accentuated by the increasing use of Africa as a transit channel for illicit drugs and psychotropic substances, which is worrisome. Those activities have created security challenges, especially that of posed by transnational organized crime in transit countries. Nigeria therefore welcomes the adoption of the revised African Union Plan of Action on Drug Control (2013-2017). We look forward to complementary efforts by the international community for the actualization of its laudable objectives.

Nigeria notes that at the subregional level, the member States of the Economic Community of West African States are collaborating actively in the fight against the menace of illicit drugs. In that regard, Nigeria welcomes the comprehensive assessment of the situation in West Africa, which identified the gaps and the needs to effectively combat illicit drug trafficking, organized crime and drug abuse.

Nigeria reiterates its full commitment to supporting subregional, regional and international mechanisms established to fight the world drug problem. My delegation calls for enhanced cooperation and collaboration among regional police chiefs, drug-law enforcement agencies and border security, as well as regional and international organizations, in the fight against illicit drug use. Our experience shows that such international cooperation has resulted in better exchange of information and intelligence-sharing and has had a positive impact on addressing the drug problem.

Nigeria has taken necessary steps with the launch of the National Drug Control Master Plan. The Plan provides an integrated and comprehensive solution to a range of drug-related issues, in line with international drug control conventions. It consists of four pillars: law enforcement, drug-demand reduction, access to and control of narcotics and psychotropic substances, and monitoring and evaluation as the coordination mechanism for effective implementation of the Master Plan.

As a test case for the Master Plan, Nigeria has embraced the sustainable alternative development programme as one of the key strategies for addressing cannabis cultivation, which is the single largest local home-grown concern for us. In that connection, Nigeria is resolved to continue to support the effective implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development.

In line with the second pillar of the Master Plan — drug-demand reduction — Nigeria is implementing a pilot treatment project that uses the modified West African Epidemiological Network on Drug Use for the Nigerian network. Eleven tertiary hospital treatment centres have been linked to that project. The final analysis of the data reveals important policy-making information, which serves as a model for other countries in West Africa. I take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the support of the European Union and for the technical assistance provided by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for the accelerated implementation of Nigeria's Drug Control Master Plan.

Nigeria is of the conviction that the outcome document of this special session, entitled "Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem" (resolution S-30/1, annex), can now be used to forge global action needed to assist millions of women, children and men around the world. My delegation wishes to reiterate Nigeria's firm commitment to the fight against illicit drugs. While much has been achieved by the Government of Nigeria, challenges still remain. We are, however, confident that with the support of the United Nations, Member States and development partners, those challenges can be adequately addressed. Our goal is to support the building of an inclusive and safer society that is free of drug abuse for present and future generations.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Igor Lukšić, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Montenegro

Mr. Lukšić (Montenegro): Montenegro aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union. Allow me, however, to stress certain points of particular relevance for my country.

In addition to having major security implications, the enormous profits generated through drug trafficking and its linkage with other forms of organized crime — corruption, money laundering and terrorism — constitute a threat to State authority, impede the economic development of societies and undermine the rule of law. Overdose, addiction and the spread of HIV and hepatitis also demonstrate why the drug problem presents a risk to the health and well-being of people worldwide. It is therefore evident that a more effective response to this phenomenon calls for a holistic and integrated approach that encompasses the entire nexus of human rights, safety, security and sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) — more specifically its Goals 3 and 16 — provides an opportunity to reinvigorate our efforts in orderto come closer to a healthier, safer and more prosperous future for all.

In our common quest to reduce the demand for and supply of drugs, criminalization and punishment measures are simply not enough, although one has to recognize their importance in protecting health and safety. We have to strive for more balanced policies, rooted in health, and also human rights, that prioritize access to prevention, treatment and care services. My country is fully cognizant of that and as a result is heavily invested in that approach. As part of our long-term orientation, we have worked diligently to develop prevention and treatment programmes with a view to preventing people, especially youth, from starting to use drugs and to developing capacities and increasing coverage to treat addiction, as well as facilitating social reintegration. In that regard, let me stress that mainstreaming gender and age perspectives in drug-related policies and programmes is essential for the overall results of our work.

Successfully addressing and countering the world drug problem is a shared responsibility and as such requires close cooperation and coordination at all levels, with the involvement and participation of civil society and academia in all aspects of drug policy. The work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, other organizations and United Nations entities in supporting Member States, especially those most in need, to tackle illicit drugs and organized crime is indispensable. The outcome document (resolution S-30/1, annex) is a good basis for more concerted efforts in the future.

It is clear that only by joint, coherent actions and close collaboration among all stakeholders can we make the difference in eradicating this scourge. We need to extend partnerships, engage young people in particular

and work out better coordination to be more efficient and effective in delivering on our agenda

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Salamat Azimi, Minister for Counter-Narcotics of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Ms. Azimi (Afghanistan) (*spoke in Dari; English text provided by the delegation*): It is my great pleasure and honour to address this historic special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem.

Afghanistan has been the prime victim of the challenges arising from the ever-expanding production and trafficking of narcotics. We are strongly committed to joining the international community in combating this global menace, which has undermined our efforts to achieve a better future. Afghanistan has done its part at the national, regional and international levels in the fight against narcotics and illegal drugs, which have become the main source of income for terrorist activities in the country.

Unfortunately today, once again, the Taliban carried out a terrorist attack in Kabul, committing a serious crime against innocent Afghan people whereby at least 28 people were killed and more than 329 injured. We strongly condemn that terrorist attack and express our gratitude to all who have extended condolences and support to Afghanistan in such a difficult moment. By committing that terrorist attack, the Taliban once again demonstrated their absolute disregard for the Afghan people and rejected the ongoing peace process. The Government of Afghanistan is committed to fighting the Taliban, Da'esh and all other terrorist groups that remain a serious threat to the security and stability of our nation.

It is obvious that the fight against drugs and narcotics is beyond the limit of any single Government. Therefore, extensive help is needed from the international community. In Afghanistan we have just adopted the national action plan, which I presented yesterday to the international community at the side event, here in New York. That strategic plan translates the commitment of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to pursuing a balanced and sustainable strategy through an integrated plan involving alternative development, poppy eradication, public information, arrests of drug traffickers and smugglers and treatment of addicts. The implementation of the plan will require the sustained and effective support of our donors in the international community. Without such support, narcotics can create massive problems not only for Afghanistan but also for all countries worldwide. We believe that one big cause of insecurity in Afghanistan is narcotic drugs and the existing precursors within the country.

Due to the importance Afghanistan attaches to this special session, His Excellency Abdul Rashid Dostum, First Vice President of Afghanistan, was scheduled to address the General Assembly at this special session. However, he was unable to attend due to unforeseen internal engagements. I would like to deliver a portion of his personal message to the Assembly.

> "Mr. President, today's historic special session of the General Assembly to address the challenges of the world drug problem is very important and a welcome event in Afghanistan. The Government of Afghanistan is committed to doing its part by joining in the efforts of the international community in the fight against this global challenge.
>
> "I wish each Member every success in carrying out the important task of achieving a desirable outcome, which is to address the challenges of the world drug problem. That is urgent and important for our security, stability and economic development. Let me express my deep gratitude and appreciation to our partners in the international community for the continued support provided to Afghanistan, as well as to our partners who, sadly, have sacrificed their lives in order to provide a better future for the war-stricken people of Afghanistan. The people of Afghanistan will truly never forget those sacrifices."

Due to time constraints, I will not read out the First Vice-President's full statement. It has been distributed in this Hall as Afghanistan's official statement and I request that the Secretariat isue the full statement as an official document of the special session.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Luis Rojas, Minister for Counter-Narcotics of the Republic of Paraguay.

Mr. Rojas (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Paraguay joins others in extending solidarity with and expressing condolences to the brotherly countries of Ecuador, Japan and Afghanistan.

Paraguay aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the Minister of State of the Dominican Republic on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States.

The world drug problem, due to its multidimensional and changing nature, is one of the most complex challenges facing us at present. It makes no distinction among borders or countries, yet its terrible consequences strike developing countries with greater force. We recognize that the world drug problem is a serious threat to democracy, the rule of law, health and justice and that it affects the dignity, security and well-being of the individual, especially children, young people and women, and ultimately of families and communities.

The Government of my country has initiated a process of frank and open dialogue to address the real situation in the country. The process is raw, long and painful yet necessary, indispensable in creating honest change in public policies. In that context, we are developing a new approach in dealing with the problem of drugs through a policy that is our own, not an imported one. It includes a new way of understanding and confronting this global scourge without lies that obscure realities, however crude they may be and motivated by political convenience. Lying and improvising on the issue of drugs carry dire consequences. We have learned that painful lesson well in my country. Today, thanks to that new focus, a public debate has been launched at all levels of society, from common citizens to university forums, a debate on the reality of public corruption, on the phenomenon of narco-politics, violence and money-laundering. That has opened a new direction, acting as social pressure in Paraguay and is taking the form of a brave public-private alliance against the crime of drug trafficking.

We recognize that there are currently different realities and positions on how to confront the problem, and we are respectful of the various measures promoted by States within the framework of their respective sovereignty. But we are convinced that the diversity of responses to the global drug problem must not get in the way of finding shared mechanisms for solutions at the regional and international levels. On the contrary, such a diversity of measures must enrich our global joint action.

In that regard, Paraguay reaffirms its commitment to the three international conventions on drugs, which it considers to be the cornerstone of the international drug control system. We are convinced that human beings must be the focus of the fight against the problem and that the ultimate purpose of the conventions is to preserve the health and welfare of people. Paraguay accordingly reiterates that the world drug problem must be addressed under the principle of common and shared responsibility, in accordance with national laws and applicable international law, in particular international human rights law, while respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other States.

In Paraguay, international, regional and subregional cooperation is a central component of support for efforts to respond to the drug problem effectively, adequately and in a balanced manner. We therefore believe that it is essential to continue promoting such cooperation. We believe that progress in meeting international commitments and actions undertaken by States must be based on a comprehensive, multidisciplinary and balanced approach to all the components of the world drug problem, thereby ensuring a reduction in both supply and demand. Let us not focus on strategies that have proved to be ineffectual.

In that regard, the focus should be on the structural and socioeconomic factors underpinning the problem of drugs within our societies, and we must implement comprehensive, inclusive and appropriate responses and encouraging alternative and sustainable development. Furthermore, we must strengthen public health systems and implement a solid approach to health in the fight against drugs, in order to ensure respect for the human rights of consumers, while at the same time ensuring the provision of care with dignity and without discrimination. Similarly, States must strengthen their strategies to prevent, detect and punish the corruption linked to drug-trafficking activities and related crimes, and improve the tools used to investigate money-laundering. On the other hand, we believe that scientific research on cannabis must be encouraged in the medical and industrial areas, and we are open to accepting the results and working in accordance with that research in a responsible manner.

Paraguay calls upon States to analyse the possibility of implementing alternatives to incarceration for those who have committed minor offenses related to drug use and possession, where appropriate and consistent with their national legislation. In Paraguay, the consumer is not a criminal for simply having used drugs; users are citizens who need specialized health care. We reiterate our firm support for the effort to suppress the use of the death penalty in all of its forms, and especially for drug-related crimes.

Finally, Paraguay reiterates its firm commitment to the fight against the global scourge of drugs, under existing international conventions, based on the principle of the common and shared responsibility of all States, while respecting the sovereignty and the particular characteristics of each country.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, Federal Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control of Pakistan.

Mr. Ali Khan (Pakistan): It is indeed a pleasure for me to address this high-level gathering in its discussion on the world drug problem. We share, appreciate and support the global concern about the devastating effects of illicit drugs.

Pakistan's geographical location has confronted it with multifaceted challenges and has exposed it as the prime victim and transit country for the majority of global opiates and cannabis. We believe that the drug dynamics in the production, transit and target countries are diverse. No two countries and no two regions have a similar environment. There are therefore no one-size-fit-all solutions.

Pakistan has put in place a robust and comprehensive legal policy and administrative framework to counter the menace of illicit drugs. We take pride in having saved the world from over 1.86 billion doses of narcotics over the past three years. Last year, we seized over 342 tons of illicit drugs. As the one of the top contributors to international seizures beyond our territorial borders, we contributed to seizures of almost 25 tons of illicit drug around the world. Drug demand reduction, treatment and rehabilitation are high on our list of priorities.

With due respect for the sovereignty and rights of Member States, we are concerned about the emerging trends in some parts of the world to legalize the use of illicit drugs. That would give an unnecessary fillip to drug demand, thereby igniting the supply chain and having a direct fallout on our region and the world. Furthermore, the concepts involved that lack consensus, such as harm reduction and the so-called human rights-based approach, are likely to further complicate the issue. Over the years, we have all endeavoured to build a drug-free society, not a drug-tolerant society.

I urge that the existing United Nations drug control conventions be treated as a repository of core guiding principles for developing an international approach to combating drugs. We would expect greater focus on the prime target and transit countries in terms of mustering resources for capacity-building in the front-line States in the war against drugs. That should be commensurate to the threat with which they are confronted and proportionate to their core contributions to the cause. The international community needs to do more to counter the menace of narcotics in all its forms. I believe that that is possible through better coordination and cooperation among Member States.

In conclusion, let me say that what we decide to adopt in the coming days will help to determine the future of the global efforts to save our succeeding generations from the scourge of narcotic drugs.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Nkosinathi Nhleko, Minister of Police of the Republic of South Africa.

Mr. Nhleko (South Africa): The delegation of South Africa commends the President for his leadership and the manner in which he is conducting the proceedings of this special session. We pledge our support for the successful conclusion of the session. We equally commend both the Chair of the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) and the Chair of the Board tasked by the CND with the preparations for the special session for their unflinching determination in the preparations for this occasion.

The thirtieth special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem has been convened at a critical juncture, when Member States are grappling with the challenge of how to effectively address and counter the world drug problem. South Africa recalls that it was the General Assembly that laid the foundation for the international fight against drug trafficking and its associated problems with the adoption of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs in 1961. Our overarching objective since the beginning of the war on drugs has been to promote the health and welfare of humankind. At the same time, we have all undertaken measures to restrict the use of drugs to medical and scientific purposes.

Today, we have gathered to review the implementation of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, which provided Member States with a balanced and integrated approach to continuing the international fight against the world drug problem. The three international drug control conventions

should serve as our basis going forward. On that note, South Africa takes this opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to those instruments.

South Africa realizes that drug trafficking and drug abuse remain an issue of concern to many countries, especially developing countries. While progress has been made in addressing that scourge, we are cognizant that drug trafficking and its associated challenges remain a major threat to the security, health and socioeconomic architecture and development of many countries.

Like other countries, South Africa has implemented an integrated and balanced approach, modelled on the three major pillars of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action, namely, a reduction in demand, a reduction in supply, and international cooperation. In that regard, South Africa has adopted law-enforcement, health, judicial and social policies and measures to deal with the negative impact of illicit drugs. Those policies are aimed at reducing drug addiction and abuse among the young, the rise in the burden of disease and the rise in violence and criminal activities associated with drugs.

Cautious in confronting the challenges at hand, South Africa adopted its national drug master plan for the period 2013-2017 to help the Government realize its vision of a society free of substance abuse, so that attention could be focused on raising the quality of life of all South Africans. At the continental level, we continue to make concerted efforts to implement existing regional instruments to counter the world drug problem.

In addition, South Africa welcomes the twenty-fifth meeting of the Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, held in Algeria in September 2015, which culminated in the second Russia-Africa Anti-Drug Dialogue, which took place in Durban in March 2016. The Dialogue stressed the need to address the world drug problem by implementing a comprehensive, multidisciplinary and balanced approach to a reduction in drug supply and demand and its impact, as well as the rehabilitation and social integration of drug users and the implementation of alternative development programmes.

As the target date approaches for the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action, South Africa believes that financial and technical assistance should be an integral part of our regional and international cooperation efforts. It will assist us in accomplishing the goals and objectives set forth in the Political Declaration and Plan of Action. My delegation therefore calls for effective and decisive measures to address illicit drug production and trafficking. That is purely because drug trafficking and its associated challenges undermine national safety and security and threaten to reverse the socioeconomic gains we have achieved as a young democracy. It is in that context that South Africa remains confident that we can all achieve a society free of substance abuse.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Joseph Nkaissery, Cabinet Secretary for Interior and Coordination of National Government of Kenya.

Mr. Nkaissery (Kenya): The Government of Kenya welcomes the convening of this special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem. We commend the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), the Board tasked by the CND with the preparations for the special session and the Secretariat for their work in preparing this special session.

Kenya aligns itself with the position of the African Group, to be delivered by the representative of the Sudan.

My delegation notes that illicit drug cultivation, trafficking and abuse continue to cause adverse health and socioeconomic effects on people, thereby undermining the security and development of nations. As a result, the Government of Kenya reaffirms its commitment to implementing the provisions of the three international drug control conventions that form the basis of the world drug control strategy. In doing so, Kenya has enacted national policies and legislation to incorporate and implement the provisions of those treaties at the national level.

My delegation is convinced that the overall objective of drug control should be to eliminate the availability and use of illicit narcotic and psychotropic substances through evidence-based interventions on drug-demand reduction, drug-supply reduction, countering money-laundering and promoting international judicial cooperation among States to address other cross-cutting issues, including drugs and human rights, alternative development and the protection of vulnerable populations.

Kenya has made strides in the control and mitigation of drug abuse and has ratified the international drug control conventions. Kenya revised its Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act in 2015, which sets the legal framework for drug control. In its effort to counter money-laundering, Kenya has set up a financial reporting centre that identifies the proceeds of crime, money-laundering and the financing of terrorism. In addition, Kenya has set up a national agency to coordinate the country's drug control strategy, which integrates the efforts of all stakeholders through the implementation of the country's national drug policy.

Furthermore, the war on drugs has received political support, with His Excellency the President of Kenya leading at the front. In 2015, the President ordered the destruction of ships laden with illicit drugs that were captured on the Kenyan coast. That has not only deterred illicit drug trafficking in the country but also sends a strong message to the world that Kenya is determined to be a drug-free nation.

The war on drugs comes at a great cost, and Kenya faces serious challenges owing to its porous borders, which are used for the flow of illicit small arms and human trafficking, as well as drug trafficking. Those crimes go hand in hand with money-laundering, which is used, so it is believed, to finance terrorist groups such as Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaida. In the recent past, Kenya has suffered major terrorist attacks, which has made the curtailment of drug trafficking and money-laundering a priority concern for our country.

We call on the United Nations and its agencies and programmes to enhance assistance for developing countries such as Kenya with capacity-building and training. We also call on developed countries and donor agencies to increase their funding, especially for transit countries, so that we can close the drug routes. We can achieve that goal if we do it together; regional and international cooperation is the key.

My delegation is convinced that this special session represents a critical step in the global drug control strategy, as it presents an opportunity to address successes, challenges and opportunities in the endeavour to attain a world free of drug abuse. It is therefore our desire that this session bring out the commitment of Member States to addressing the world drug problem, strengthening international cooperation and support for developing countries and, most important, providing hope to the thousands of people across the globe who are victims of drug abuse, illicit cultivation, illicit drug trafficking and money-laundering.

In conclusion, I assure the General Assembly of the support and participation of my delegation and of the Republic of Kenya in the fight against drugs.

The Acting President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Sirodjidin Aslov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan.

Mr. Aslov (Tajikistan): It is my honour to speak today at the thirtieth special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem, which provides an opportunity not only to review the implementation of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action, but also to develop new and effective measures to combat that evil.

Drug distribution and trafficking problems have acquired great importance at the national level in almost all regions of the world and have gone far beyond the social and criminal spheres. Combating drug trafficking and drug abuse is part of the fight against organized crime, international terrorism and extremism, and is being carried out through the implementation of various foreign policy, economic, legal, organizational, technical, operational, preventive and other measures.

In the sphere of shared interests, the Central Asian States are carrying out coordinated activities through their specialized drug-control coordinating agencies. The Republic of Tajikistan, like other States in the region that share a border with Afghanistan, is shouldering a significant burden in combating drug trafficking. Tajikistan therefore pays special attention to the strengthening and development of international cooperation. It seeks to advance initiatives aimed at joint and coordinated actions by all interested countries and international organizations.

It is necessary to continue strengthening socioeconomic assistance to the people of Afghanistan in order to address issues of employment and economic recovery. Security issues in our region are inextricably linked with issues of combating terrorism and extremism, which are also fuelled by income from drug production.

From 1996 to 2012, the Government of Tajikistan implemented four national drug control programmes. An important step in Tajikistan's implementation of its anti-drug policy was the approval of the presidential decree entitled "National strategy to fight against

illicit drug-trafficking in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2013-2020", the main goal of which is to significantly reduce the illicit distribution of narcotic drugs and their non-medical use and the degree of impact of illicit trafficking on health, safety, society and State security, and to expand international cooperation.

From 1996 to 2015, in the territory of Tajikistan, more than 113 tons of drugs were seized, including 34 tons of heroin and 38 tons of opium. In 2015 alone, around five tons of drugs were seized by Tajikistan law-enforcement agencies. Measures taken by the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan have made it possible to reduce the recorded number of drug-related crimes in the country.

As a result of the measures adopted by the Government of Tajikistan, and with the support of donor countries and international organizations, including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, our country has achieved certain successes in the field of drug control and has established close cooperation with such interested countries as the Russian Federation, the United States, China, Afghanistan and other countries.

In conclusion, I would like to affirm that international cooperation in the field of drug control issues will remain one of the priority tasks for the Government of Tajikistan.

The Acting President: I give the floor to Mr. Rui Jorge Carneiro Mangueira, Minister of Justice and Human Rights of Angola.

Mr. Mangueira (Angola): On this occasion, Angola expresses its support and appreciation for the efforts of the United Nations, in particular the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as the leading United Nations entity for addressing and combating the world drug problem.

Angola welcomes the adoption of this special session's final outcome document, entitled "Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem" (resolution S-30/1, annex). That instrument provides a new impetus for cooperation aimed at tackling the drug problem. In order to achieve the resolution's implementation throughout the world, it will be necessary to establish and strengthen targeted cooperation among countries and regional and international organizations.

In today's world, the drug situation remains difficult and complex, making it imperative for Member States to reach consensus on implementing a robust and effective system aimed at addressing the threats posed by new psychotropic substances at the global level. It would be appropriate to simultaneously develop efforts to strengthen the ability to put hazardous substances on the international agenda in cooperation with the World Health Organization.

Another problem is the emergence of the Internet as an online market for drugs. The international community needs to proactively address that aspect of the drug problem in collaboration with enforcement agencies, industries, civil society and other partners in order to find effective ways to prevent online drug trafficking.

With regard to international security, the drug market is the most dynamic of criminal markets. Drug trafficking and drug production are still among the most profitable criminal activities for organized crime groups globally and are closely related to terrorism. In that regard, the Angolan delegation would like to make the following observations.

First, we must safeguard the overall authority of the existing drug control system. Since the elimination of the scourge of drugs is a common responsibility of humankind, the three international conventions on drug control and the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action should continue to serve as our main guidelines. In particular, the potential of the three conventions can be used better, with full respect for their purposes. We should do a better job of implementing the principles of common and shared responsibility and a comprehensive, integrated and balanced approach, as identified in the Political Declaration and Plan of Action, in order to reach the maximum degree of international consensus.

Secondly, in recent years there have been voices calling for the legalization of drugs and raising questions about the three United Nations conventions and other existing international drug control mechanisms. That is not conducive to the sound development of international drug control mechanisms. We must fully recognize the seriously harmful effects of drugs on human physical and mental health, and we must resist the legalization of drugs, while taking into account a focused approach to health, education, counselling and reintegration.

Thirdly, this year we began the important work of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). That will require a collective partnership and solid commitment. We

cannot achieve the Sustainable Development Goals without a bold and courageous collaboration between Member States and the United Nations.

With regard to the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action approved in 2009, as well as the implementation of the three conventions on drugs, Angola has adopted domestic legislation to control the drug problem and has created institutions that can run the overall policy to counter that phenomenon. The fight against illicit drug trafficking and drug abuse are part of the Government's priorities and its programme for the period of 2012 to 2017. An anti-drug programme was developed by the Angolan Government in partnership with the inter-ministerial committee on drug abuse control.

The document that was adopted as result of that collaboration represented a step towards implementing the 2009 Plan of Action. It includes the following measures, among others: the reduction of supply, which consists of implementing a faster and more effective system to combat threats in that regard; reduction in demand, which consists of re-relaunching drug prevention policies; and international cooperation, as an objective embodied in the national anti-drug strategy, through the adoption of a strong position in international forums and with partner countries. Angola reaffirms its ongoing commitment to adopting legislative, administrative and policy measures in line with the international instruments to combat drugs, so that together we can fight this global scourge.

Finally, Angola believes that this General Assembly special session on the world drug problem represents an important milestone for the implementation of policies aimed at combating a phenomenon that affects the lives of millions of people worldwide. We call for an international anti-drug policy that is more focused on the human aspects of the problem and on public health.

The meeting rose at 1.55 p.m.